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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the experience of a 21-year mentoring relationship between two rural school administrators, this paper describes 11 components of an effective working mentorship. These elements are: establishing the relationship, the communications process, setting goals, determining skills, time commitment, broadening the protege's horizons, additional benefits to the protege, types and extent of interventions, leadership versus teamwork, linkages and connections, and benefits to the organization. This experience reflects current trends in the business community in which job-embedded learning, which includes mentoring, is considered to be a new paradigm for staff development. There is a need to develop more formal recognition of mentoring as a tool or avenue within a rural administrator's professional development program. Mentoring presents educators with an alternative to workshop-based professional development and other more traditional inservice learning programs and is more relevant to the situation of rural administrators and educators. The real challenge, however, is to find the way by which this entire activity can be incorporated into the academic accreditation process in a manner similar to that utilized by proponents of prior learning assessment. (Contains 46 references.) (TD)

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Mentorship & the Development of Rural Leadership

Elaine M. Borden-Ballard & Glenn Wm. Sinclair, Canada

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Mentorship & the Development of Rural Leadership

Elaine M. Borden-Ballard & Glenn Wm. Sinclair, Canada

Abstract

The study examined findings in recent literature on *mentoring* and related this to the experience of a twenty-one year mentoring relationship. This led to two conclusions:

- Validation that this experience was itself reflective of current trends and expectations of both informal and formal mentoring programs.
- There is a need to develop more formal recognition of mentoring as a tool or avenue within a rural administrator's professional development program.

The challenge however, is to find the way by which this entire activity can be incorporated into the academic accreditation process in a manner similar to that utilized by the proponents of *prior learning assessment* (PLA).

Introduction

The world of rural leadership is challenged to describe or design opportunities for staff development that do not require or rely upon post-secondary training. Communities in the hinterland oft-times wonder why, after having obtained a university degree, a teacher or a social worker or a business manager, upon being hired, immediately wants to know what are the provisions for professional development. For those individuals wishing to move into roles of leadership and/or administration, the challenge is even greater: how to obtain the necessary skills while trying to carry out present tasks, combined with gaining formal accreditation through the appropriate post-secondary programs.

To many, with their roots increasingly comfortable in the rural environment, too much emphasis may be placed on the formal coursework and not enough on *hands on* practical training. Yet how does the potential leader find a solution that is more *grassroots*? How can working or potential administrators accomplish their goals related to daily leadership and still successfully add to their skill base so that they are recognized as credible, *promotable* executive candidates?

Here is the second part of our response to the challenge of how two professionals connected through mentoring to create a leadership development program for one rural administrator.

Why did this journey get started? And, how did it then keep going?

Rationale

There are two key participants in this study: (i) the leader at the centre of this study (as **protege**), and (ii) the leader who, first as a professor and then as a professional colleague, provided the advice and guidance (as **mentor**). Both believe that mentorship is a professional development tool whose time has come. It is a more realistic approach by which to acquire and/or pass on the practical skills needed to meet the demands placed on developing leaders by staff members and the communities they serve. They ventured down this road in part as a result of an independent compatibility analysis relatively early in their relationship. The results of simultaneous Myers-Briggs assessments showed useful compatibility, validating an earlier effective professor/student learning experience. The M/B process itself is now a recommended procedure out of the work of Irvin & McDaniel (1994) when attempting to establish effective mentorship pairings.

This idea of mentorship is not new. Crow & Matthews (1998) borrowing from Clawson (1980) remind us of the story from Homer: When Odysseus left on his journey to fight in the Trojan War, he left his son Telemachus, in the care of his loyal friend, Mentor. Mentor not only guided and educated Telemachus, he attended to every facet of his life, that is, social, intellectual and physical. According to Crow & Matthews, quoting from Kay (1990), Mentor not only provided encouragement and assistance to Telemachus, he taught Telemachus to think and act for himself.

The foresight of Odysseus using an older experienced person to guide and train an inexperienced person has not been lost throughout history and today. More and more, it is seen as an essential tool to assist the newcomer upon his or her entry into a profession (Fleming, 1991). *Mentor* has come to mean someone with experience who teachers and guides someone with less experience. The French word *protege*, meaning one protected by someone with experience and influence, is closely connected to the English word *mentor*. A mentor is slightly removed from the situation in which the *protege* is involved, looking on and encouraging and providing advice. Sullivan (1992) describes a mentor as being a screen, an avenue, a wise counsellor, a support and a role model.
Renihan (1998) suggests that *mentorship*, along with recruitment & induction, continuing professional development, professional affiliation and other related themes, is an important component of leadership.

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Moreover, recent literature provides further evidence that mentoring can, and ought to be given more attention in the area of professional development.

Our mentor, from his experience as a consultant to government and business, believes more attention should be paid to *field-based* leadership development. It has been his experience over the past thirty years, that there are too many unique requirements within individual assignments and there is too much diversity in the basic talent of potential leadership candidates, to rely primarily (if not solely) on the academic community to train and accredit the future executive talent needed to operate our rural institutions. With the ever-increasing shift towards more technology, components of the economy will move into rural environments thereby countering somewhat, the impacts of the amalgamation/ consolidation of farms. As Dr. David McKinnon (1999) has noted, the ethics of *caring* and *doing public good* may be best delivered in the rural setting. As he further argued, caring teachers don't just teach – they enter into the lives of students; therefore this may help us see that living in rural Canada is NOT a deficit.

Cottage industries and home-based businesses are on the rise. Such people oft-times want a less hectic community life. James Montgomery (1999) of Malaspina University College suggests that it's often the case that the rural context is more fun, closer to the action and therefore more relevant. Too often rural is talked about as a place that is missing stuff (i.e. the deficiency model), yet many rural people describe rural in positive terms. He further posits that we should replace the *rural as deficit* concept with *rural as different*. By moving away from the urban scene, they will place new pressures on the suburban and rural institutions that provide public services to the community and its citizens. To maintain responsiveness to any re-shaping of the community's make-up, the local leaders, even if fully accredited, will require frequent re-training or up-grading to maintain currency in skill sets and/or keep a sense of leading-edge managerial thinking. Furthermore, the nature of the daily tasks probably won't permit the leaders to return to the academic classroom.

Montgomery (1999) provides key findings that can assist the establishment of mentoring as a viable professional development tool: *rural professionals are a homogeneous group* and *shared similar sentiments in every discussion of rural preparation, recruiting, retention, and living and working in a rural community*. Moreover, *rurality is valued*, so it is worthwhile for organizations to try new methods to keep recruits in their area. He further discovered that rural professionals primarily don't go to rural communities for money, nor do they leave because of it. So what are the largest number of complaints? Ease of access to higher education, especially for professional development! And there were even serious requests for some new form(s) of training to be made available.

Another opportunity to consider the advantage(s) of mentoring.

The Journey: Elaine's Story as the Mentee/Protégé

During the summer of 1979, I enrolled in a University of Saskatchewan course entitled Educational Administration 323b. I knew that likely I would be one of the oldest students as I had stayed home to have my three children before embarking on my teaching career. My supposition held true and so when I walked into the class and saw the numbers of young students, I walked to the back and took a seat, almost as an observer. People were filing in and among them was a tall fellow wearing brown corduroy pants and a yellow shirt, sporting long hair and a beard. He had the audacity to sit at the prof's desk, after which he leaned back and folded his hands over his stomach and watched. We waited a period of several minutes, as courteous students should do, then he stood up and walked to the chalkboard and wrote ***Dr. Glenn Sinclair****. I thought,* ***Oh no! This is the prof?!!***

It didn't take long to figure out that this was a different sort of bird. For one thing, he had no intention of teaching to the course outline. No - he was going to teach a course in ethics in administration because that was what he had just completed his doctoral dissertation on. He even offered to divide the class into two sections and instruct us at different times in order to maximize time spent with each student. He interviewed each student in order to get to know them better and to let them know what would be expected of them as a member of his class.

A few days into the class, Dr. Sinc started off on a topic which, in hindsight, was ground-breaking, but to which I took exception at the time, this being child custody issues. I must have been slightly fired up as I was usually a ***nonconfrontational*** *sort; but, I approached him at the break and asked if we could discuss the issue. He complied and we had a good debate, but at its conclusion, each felt a shared and amicable understanding.*

Throughout the class, we all became very close and carried on numerous social activities at the acreage on which my family lived. Glenn and I kept in touch regularly when he returned to Vancouver.

At this time I was teaching Grade Three (3) in a small school and had ***no*** *administrative ambitions. Through the next couple of years,*

Glenn encouraged me to continue to take courses toward an Education degree and to consider administration. Eventually the Board of Education opened up a vice-principalship at my school and without telling Glenn I applied for, and got, the job. I still remember calling his office at the Department of Indian Affairs, as he now was working in Regina, and leaving a message for Dr. Sinclair to call the Vice-Principal at Osler School. Coincidentally, I answered his returned call, and when he asked to speak to the Vice-Principal. I said, ***You're speaking to her!!***

Over the course of the next twenty years, we carried on our individual career paths, mine somewhat more stationary than his as I remained in the same school division in Saskatchewan, moving from the vice-principalship to a principalship in a variety of different school situations. However, during the summers especially, but also at other times, we did have opportunities to collaborate and work together on a variety of projects. We did some curriculum writing as part of a team, conducted teacher training classes in British Columbia at two different aboriginal-owned independent (private) schools, supplied leadership and leadership training in several church settings, took a couple of classes together at the B.C. Justice Institute and, with all of this, had the pleasure of getting to know each other's immediate and extended families and friends.

In looking back over the twenty plus (20+) years of our ***mentorship*** *relationship, I find that I learned to be a more confident person in tasks which I undertook, became more forward-looking in my attitudes toward work, experienced leaps of professional growth, and became more willing to take on challenges. As a principal who has operated without a vice-principal and often feeling isolated, I relied on Glenn's advice, experience and expertise on many occasions. I have even become confident enough of my own skills and knowledge sets, that I now take time to mentor others or at least share insights and suggestions with team mates in contexts well beyond the principal/teacher supervisory setting. At times I model after Glenn, but often I adapt to new requirements or amalgamate his advice with my own experiences. I have been grateful for his encouragement, support and unfailing friendship.*

The Validation

Now, how does this journey demonstrate the value of mentoring as a way to improve the skill and knowledge base of the leader (from *potentiality* to *actuality*)?

We believe there are at least eleven components to the establishment of our effective working mentorship.

Establishing the Relationship

Initially the relationship developed informally: as Coley's research pointed out: Regular contact (was) important (to be effective) and there was a need for flexibility. Furthermore due to the structure of the protege's work environment, the mentor needed to be outside the system (Coley, 1996). As Burke & McKeen (1997) have discovered, the mentorship started early in the protege's career, was not actively encouraged by her organization, and (she) definitely (was) not targeted for special attention. While not formal, the mentorship experience did manage to overcome Fleming's (1991) concern that informal programs may not help *women assume administrative positions* or her reference to Gray's need for *readily accessible opportunities for capable people to be mentored.* To further allay Fleming's concerns, there was neither a *great risk factor* due to the trusting relationship established over the years nor was there a problem of a *sexual connotation.*

Contrary to Crow & Matthews (1998), it also did not seem to matter that the mentor matching was not a result of critical consideration by both her district and herself. In fact, having an informal mentor is supported by Pollock (1995) in part because there is no assignment by the organization. It is harder to say whether the relationship was established according to social exchange theory (Cook 1987, Thibault & Kelly 1959) or through *signals about the likely success of those whom they choose to mentor* (Olian, Carroll & Giannantonio 1993).

This has not precluded different mentors also participating in the protege's development, particularly in mid-career transitions and different socialization stages (Crow & Matthews 1998). In the final analysis, Crow & Matthews summary insight says it best:

> *significant mentor relationships form because of happenstance... particularly where they have a high regard for one another. Mentor relationships form best when mentors & proteges share a similar style of thinking (Parkay 1988). Roche (1979) found that many mentor relationships in the business world developed into lengthy friendships... The most effective mentorships are those in which the partners are allowed to choose each other freely (Zey 1985).*

Communications Process

The importance of effective communications is apparent in almost every leadership development program. Mentoring is no different. One early step is creating comfort between the parties. Again, as Crow & Matthews (1998) determined, *mentors can help proteges relieve their anxiety by finding a comfort zone.* Fleming (1991) stresses *the mentor must give relevant information to the mentee so that learning takes place in less time than it would if the person had to get the information through the normal process... other general functions are to be a listener, a confidant, a motivator and a communicator for the protege.*

Another key was the appreciation by the mentor, once the protege moved into a full administrative role, of the diminished opportunity to carry out *thoughtful analysis of practices or decisions* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Also critical, the protege was dealing with a myriad of decisions during her work day, with little time to prepare and reflect. Having a mentor allowed time to dissect and discuss some of the specific incidents in after-hours contexts thereby strengthening the protege's knowledge and skill sets without disrupting the on-site decision-making process.

Asking for assistance was not *perceived as ineffective* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). We agree *that mid-career administrators who ask for mentoring show strength instead of weakness*; the focus at all times *is attaining dynamic leadership* (Crow & Matthews, 1998).

Distance was not a negative factor as Crow & Matthews (1998) found: *although proximity is a factor to consider in mentor-protege matches, modern technology has reduced distances...*

In the establishment of the communication process, one step was omitted according to Coley's findings. There was no joint collaboration between the mentor and the protege's supervisor(s) to *address the protege's development needs* (Coley, 1999). Communication was straightforward and frequent between the mentor and the protege solely.

Setting the Goals

The goals of mentoring are at the core and guide the rest of the mentoring process (Crow & Matthews, 1998). The role of the mentor was established as *one who supports, and facilitates resource sharing, problem solving, and feedback separate from the evaluation process* (Robbins, 1999). And, *a completely laissez-faire...outlook towards mentoring (was) clearly not proposed* (Hawkey, 1998). Nor was the mentor to be evaluator (Cohn & Sweeney, 1992). A prime goal was to overcome any sense of isolation to prevent *what Lortie refers to as* ***privitism*** *in which there is a lack of sharing or talking about experiences with students, teaching and learning* (Hauserman, 1993). Another aim was to provide some shielding *from the harmful effects of making wrong decisions, yet (permitting) the protege (to learn) from the experience, to handle similar future situations* (Crow & Matthews, 1998).

Kram's (1985) two functions of mentoring - career (learning the ropes, etc.) and psychosocial (development of the individual in his or her social environment) were addressed. It was in the mentoring context that a vital aspect of social environment was most effectively looked after. A reason for having potential leaders go to university for training is that almost all universities argue that it is there wherein a sense of community is built. But does that community parallel the one to be encountered in the rural context? Most universities are mini-cities in and of themselves. Mentoring is context-specific and in this instance it was definitely rural focussed and rural based.

A degree of reciprocity was also sought; *through collaborative and reflective discussions mentors expand their understanding of leadership (and) mentors gain a sense of renewed enthusiasm for the profession* (Crow & Matthews, 1998).

Determining the Skills

Throughout the protege's journey several career moves occurred. Each time there were more issues than concern about location. Again as Crow & Matthews (1998) noted from Hall (1986) there was *a change in self-image and self-esteem*; and, as they further found in Crow, Levine & Nager (1990), oft-times *a move from perceiving oneself as a master to perceiving oneself as a novice.*

It was at times such as these that attention became less goal-oriented and more skill determination, those (i) wanted and (ii) needed.

(i) The protege wanted more skills in leadership, which Coley (1986) argues can be readily obtained through effective mentorship. Mentoring also helped increase job satisfaction and decreased work alienation (Burke & McKeen, 1997). It was definitely an individual process; in fact, *more a process of individuation than socialization* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). And as Crow & Matthews also point out, there was *heightened sense of career ambiguity (and) heightened awareness of longer-term dimensions of career effectiveness.*

As the protege developed the various skill sets she wanted, she also demonstrated a keen interest in exploring various other careers as side bars (Hall, 1980). These included forays into the private sector

where business opportunities enabled her to acquire additional skills and new contacts.

(ii) If the protege was going to succeed on the promotional ladder, the mentor (being outside the organization and at some physical distance) needed to encourage her to move beyond his direct influence. Inspiring the creative side of the protege, there emerged a willingness to adopt *ideas from others* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). And through political and business associations of her own, plus introductions to university colleagues by the mentor, she made a variety of other connections. *As acquaintances are made with others in the profession, visibility opportunities increase* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). The value mentoring can have re enhancing the usefulness of the formal university experience also became apparent.

The mentor provided cautionary advice about effective ways to be successful on campus by connecting the college and professional lives in as harmonious a fashion as possible given the nature of the rural community the protege worked in versus the context of the urban university. This relates to benefits Crow & Matthews (1998) assign to the mentoring process: *protection from damaging situations (and) opportunities for challenging and risk-taking activities.*

The physical distance factor also necessitated that some of the more immediate socialization issues were better addressed through the protege's own emerging networks and among her teaching peers. Crow & Matthews (1998) suggest this can be a challenge for the mentor; but, in this instance other sources of guidance within and nearer the system were more effective at helping determine and develop the needed skill sets.

As the protege continued to excel at new administrative tasks and assignments, a heightened sense of respect was gained from the new sets of peers (fellow administrators). Through nominations (of the protege) to committees or in direct conversations, these peers themselves encouraged the protege *to be more dynamic and reflective* (Crow & Matthews, 1998) which counterbalanced any job constraints which might have otherwise inhibited such professional development.

Again all this took place in a rural context that university courses would have had great difficulty replicating.

Time Commitment

Time for this process has never been an issue and the relationship is now well into its 21st year. In essence, even the evaluation component (Gaskill, 1993) has only come to the fore as a result of developing this paper. Pollock (1995) describes three models that outline timing patterns (Phillips, 1977; Missirian, 1982; Kram, 1983). None seem to apply directly, perhaps because of the informality by which the relationship started and continues.

Such issues as older-younger, and expert-novice (Crow & Matthews, 1998) have not been significant factors due to the longevity of the relationship. Perhaps, however, the lack of a time factor may illustrate one advantage for more formalization in the mentoring processes. Crow & Matthews (1998) note that *time is a critical feature of socialization and therefore of mentoring. The sequence or lack of sequence of learning that occurs is pivotal to reaching the goals of mentoring.* If mentoring was established in a format parallel to PLA (prior learning assessment), time would be scrutinized more appropriately. As Crow & Matthews (1998) further espoused *a major feature of our map or model of socialization includes time - as an organizer of mentoring experiences and as an influence on mentoring content, methods and goals.*

Broadening the Horizons (of the Protege)

The process met the concerns of Hubbard & Robinson (1998) that the loneliness and confusion experienced by upwardly mobile women be alleviated and that the activities be a win-win situation. The mentoring also started early in the protege's career and to some extent, due to the connections of the mentor the protege experienced *an aura of power and upward mobility* (Hopson, 1995). The relationship was reciprocal (Olian et al, 1993) and it did extend the protege's network to others in her profession (Fleming, 1991), to other professions and to other experiences (Kram 1985, Kram & Isabella 1985, Noe 1988b, Olian et al 1986). In particular, by connecting the protege to an educational leader in another province, a form of collegial assistance was introduced (Schuman cited in Hauserman, 1993).

(i) Perhaps a formalized mentoring program would have established more diverse relationships (Gaskill, 1993). Formalization would have ensured participation by those superiors responsible for *the protege's job responsibilities and career development* (Coley, 1996).

(ii)The connections to other professions did reflect Burke and McKeen findings (1997) *females reported receiving significantly more psychosocial benefits from the mentoring relationship than did males.* Introductions to other professions helped *open doors not previously available* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Mentoring provided

an avenue of experience not readily available in campus-based practicums and/or seminars (Crow & Matthews, 1998).

(iii) But the horizons were probably broadened most through introductions to other experiences. Working on projects in another province, within the aboriginal community and among a diversity of professional talent helped address Hauserman's concern that *the sharing of experiences by itself is not enough* (1993). He goes on to say, *what is needed is someone who knows and understands the situation; someone who can relate to the stresses, problems, concerns, failures and successes.*

Additional Benefits to Protégé

There were times when the protege actually taught the mentor, i.e. Coley's role reversal (1996). However, there were less quantitative and qualitative measurements which Coley also recommended. A more formal process would provide for this and help maintain a tracking and recording system.

The protege never had any obvious problem(s) leaving an old role which is somewhat at variance to Crow & Matthews (1998). Again, a formal mentor program might better track why that is. For this particular informal mentorship, non-issues were allowed to remain non-issues. According to Crow & Matthews (1998), several types of evaluation should be used. Throughout the past twenty years, the protege has managed to handle all four of Nicholson's (1984) adjustment modes (replication, absorption, determination and exploration) constructively and usefully. And the protege learned the key things Fleming (1991) identified in the Bova & Phillips survey (1984): *risk-taking behaviour, communication skills, survival in the organization, skills of their profession, respect for people, setting high standards and not compromising them, how to be a good listener, how to get along with all kinds of people, leadership qualities and what it means to be a professional.*

Types/Extent(s) of Interventions

Hawkey (1998) found that *as they taught, so they mentored.* In many ways the informality of the teaching/learning style/experience where the protege and mentor first met, continued throughout the mentorship. On the other hand the mentor did not expect recognition from the protege's successes, contrary to Olian et al (1993). Hauserman (1993) has found that where there is potential for isolation, a mentor can be a positive intervention. In the rural context wherein this mentorship occurred, this certainly was a possibility. The nature of interventions related in varying degrees to all four identified by Crow & Matthews (1998): knowledge, skills, behaviours and values. As well the mentor intervened to help *guide the protege in professional, career and psychosocial development.*

In many situations, the protege, in readjusting to a new context would, in turn, intervene in at least the thinking process of the mentor by the questions asked and/or the perceptions the new roles generated. There was a mutual adaptability along with increased self-awareness that resulted from the various interventions that occurred.

Should the process be more formalized it would doubtless be beneficial to add specific training and simulations to ensure mentors practice good intervention strategies. This would be preferable to simply hoping the mentor-protege relationship was sufficiently strong to accept intervention in stride.

Leadership vs. Team-playing

A major advantage mentoring has over college course work is the flexibility in the term of the relationship (i.e. can last many years, Coley 1996) combined with the continuing opportunity of both mentor and protege to move between leadership and team-mate roles. The latter can be further strengthened through development of a support network (Hauserman, 1993). An attitude of lifelong learning is created among those who are involved in mentoring programs (Daresh & Playko, 1993). The protege oft-times is in the best position to determine which of the two roles is most appropriate or effective (Crow & Matthews, 1998). But in any case *a mentor has to be believable to be of assistance* (Hawkey, 1998).

Linkages and Connections

While the relationship will no doubt continue, there is now as much reverse mentoring as anything else. The protege has developed a wide network with a diversity of linkages and many connections. The protege now has the opportunity through these linkages to help address Fleming's (1991) concern: *now that women are applying for jobs that were previously inaccessible to them, it is very important that they have access to mentoring to help them.* The protege has expanded her efforts at collaboration, sharing ideas and trying mentoring approaches to issues within her primary profession. She is a central figure within the professional development planning for her peers in educational administration. She is a source of advice and mentorship to program specialists and classroom teachers. She is, in many ways, the epitome of Hauserman's (1993) leader of peer support. Her journey is having new waves of impact.

The results of the journey are sufficiently positive that the case can be made for broader support of Fleming's (1991) recommendation: *it is important that the education system*

endorse formal organized programs in their systems to give women and minorities an equal chance at having a mentor... If some one is not willing to take the risk to mentor women and minorities, then the path for women and minorities will remain blocked. Making this process formal and accredited would give it standing and therefore improve credibility while addressing non-professional problems. As Fleming (1991) notes *formal mentoring programs are increasing but not fast enough.* By bringing accreditation into the scenario, perhaps there would be a surge in implementation.

Through the protege's development of expanded linkages, the benefits of her leadership extend into the rural communities she has served. Thus this network itself increases the value of the initial investment, particularly for those committed to the rural context. The protege continues to make inter-role and intra-role transitions (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Only now, because of her position, these are more visible and serve as role models for others starting or changing their career journeys. The linkages afford her the opportunity to share her thoughts about these. Establishing a formalized program would encourage others to make sure they gained access to her thoughts and those of others like her. In turn, as these people gain perspective on her insights they themselves become more adept at using *others' interpretations, local interpretative schemes, predispositions and purposes, and past experiences* (Louis, 1980).

The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network (Rowley, 1999) presents itself as one of the potential vehicles by which the accreditation process is pursued and attained; especially, since its first purpose is *to provide an organizational vehicle for a mentoring initiative.*

Benefits to the Organization(s)

Reflecting back over the twenty plus (20+) years wherein the protege has remained within one major rural school division, many benefits, and potential benefits, to the organization itself are evident. And these exist without prior investment by the organization.

•Theories of career development indicate that in later stages of their organizational careers after successfully advancing, senior employees are looking to leave a legacy to their institution or profession. One way of accomplishing that is through the development of junior proteges (Olian et al, 1993).

•Mentors should be recognized as a way of developing and realizing administrative aspirations by junior administrators (Hubbard & Robinson, 1998).

•Mentoring is powerful... Mentors offer many forms of assistance... Mentors also serve as problem solvers... Mentors also observe and give feedback... (Robbins, 1999).

•The number of women in the work force has increased sharply during the past century. If projections are accurate, this trend will continue well into the next century... However, even though a large number of women are joining the work force each year, few are moving into upper level positions, including academic administration... If female and male educators receive equal education and preparation for professional positions in educational administration, as evidenced by their equal representation in faculty ranks, why do men appear to move more easily up the career ladder than women? (Hubbard & Robinson, 1998).

Mentoring programs have the potential to

•improve the job performance of both mentor and protege;

•reduce turnover in early career stages;

•develop sufficient talented manager(s) to replace those about to retire;

•maintain high levels of managerial contributions through middle age and beyond;

•prepare individuals for roles of organizational leadership. (Burke & McKeen, 1989).

•The impetus for program development stems primarily from a concern for the high levels of turnover in lower managerial ranks... Mentoring programs can also provide a way to increase top management's awareness of developmental activities taking place and ensures that the executive hierarchy has a role in developing future talent in the organization (Gaskill, 1993).

•Challenging and respecting the subordinate seems to form the foundation of mentor-protege relationships and this foundation is not subsequently taken for granted (Pollock, 1995).

More generally the organization can hope to realize a number of advantages including: the transference of organizational knowledge effectively and efficiently from one generation to another; bridging the gap between experienced and non-experienced leaders in terms of organizational goals, values, expectations, culture and work performance; demonstrating concern for those entering into the new culture (Shelton & Herman, 1993). Fleming (1991) considers mentoring *the most powerful training tool and the one that is most likely to guarantee mobility within the organization.*

More particularly, Fleming (1991) contends that mentoring is especially valuable for improving the organization's use of its women staff: *women need mentors if more of them are to move into administrative positions.* Furthermore,

> *Mentors can provide women with the essential informal training, which cannot be duplicated by formal courses, workshops, and training manuals. It is here that the mentor serves as tutor to the technical aspects and unwritten rules of the organization; for example, the expected as opposed to required working*

habits; acceptable dress and mannerisms; and acceptable behaviour within given situations.

In addition, the *protege* and the *mentor* validate the benefits of mentoring which the organization could now extend to many more on its staff, by committing openly to the process..

For the ***proteges***, benefits include:

- someone to rely upon for support and encouragement
- assistance in *learning the ropes*
- tips on how to deal with others
- advice on how to handle particular situations
- introductions which may be helpful to furthering one's career

Crow & Matthews (1998) have identified other returns which may be more subtle:

- exposure to new ideas and creativity: when proteges encounter different experiences, new ideas for practice emerge; generally, people who have mentors become *more creatively productive.*
- protection from damaging situations: mentors can shield the protege from potentially damaging situations by forewarning them about what lies ahead.
- opportunities for challenging and risk-taking activities: in challenging situations, the mentor can provide the support for the proteges to take a risk without endangering their careers; this still allows for the protege to learn and gain the experience required for similar situations in the future.
- increased confidence and competence: mentors can provide support, praise and encouragement and guide the protege to an understanding of what could be done to improve the decision-making the next time.
- improved reflection: *Working with mentors allows proteges to reflect on their practices. As they talk with mentors, they become more insightful about their actions. Kanter (1977) suggested that individuals gain* ***reflective power*** *from their mentors.*

There is little in the literature which describes the benefits to the ***mentor*** but again Crow & Matthews (1998) provide some insights which suggest a real value for the organization if it encouraged more internal staff to become mentors:

- Mentors gain a renewed enthusiasm for their own career. By being involved, they avoid being isolated as well as reviewing their own growth potential and leadership qualities.
- Mentors gain many new insights. This may come in the form of new technical or computer skills. It may also come in the form of a greater understanding of what it means to be a leader.
- Mentors can gain opportunities for career change or advancement through their involvement with the protege and the mentoring process.
- Mentors gain validation of their importance and the importance of their work as a mentor.
- Mentors gain long-lasting and meaningful friendships.

To date all five points have been benefits that this mentor has experienced.

There are others that also can gain from this mentoring process. Crow & Matthews (1998) prefer to name these as ***passengers*** and include university faculty, district administrators, teachers, students, family and friends. In addition it is anticipated that this study will also identify fellow workers (including even those in direct supervisory roles to the protege plus those being supervised by the protege) as benefiting passengers.

Again Crow & Matthews (1998) provide some initial indicators of potential benefits:

- Administrators with mentoring programs in their districts have more capable leaders. Daresh & Playko (1993) found that leaders in the school districts with mentoring programs tended to be more energized by the mentoring process.
- A community of learners becomes more apparent. An attitude of lifelong learning is created among those who are involved in mentoring programs (Daresh & Playko, 1993).
- District administrators gain better recruits and candidates for administrative positions. Visibility and exposure allow more individuals to emerge as successful candidates for administrative positions (Nash & Treffinger, 1993).
- University faculty have a means to link theory and practice. Associations between internship experiences and course subject matter occur more frequently than when no internship is in place.
- Teachers and students gain the opportunity to work with more dynamic leaders. Principals who are involved with others in a collegial and reflective mentoring are more collaborative and interested in improving teaching and learning.
- Family and friends benefit from proteges learning to balance multiple roles. Through mentoring, proteges tend to have a clearer perception of the roles they play with school, family and friends.

And, In Conclusion

Fiddler (1997) illustrates how professionals learn utilizing the learning cycle created by Kolb (1974), based on the work of Kurt Lewin. He states that the Kolb cycle *suggests the need for help in planning experience and*

reviewing and theorising [sic] afterwards. This is a role which a mentor could perform. Fiddler further states that the cycle suggests some characteristics required by a mentor including two key areas:

(i) The mentor should understand *the process of reflective practice* and be able to facilitate this by understanding the types of experiences needed and the theoretical basis which supports the reflective process.
(ii) The second area is the need for the mentor to possess *appropriate behavioural skills to work successfully with other adults.*

These sentiments are echoed by Wilkin (1993) who states that with regards to mentoring, *the postmodern perspective invites a reassessment of the status and role of disciplinary theory and also of public practical theory vis-a-vis the status and role of that theory which is the outcome of personal reflection.* Hawkey (1998) in her article on mentor pedagogy speaks of the evolution of models of mentoring *from the apprenticeship and competency model, through to the reflective model.*

Longitudinal studies are needed to further our understanding of the developmental course of mentor-protege relationships (Pollock, 1995; Burke & McKeen, 1997). But the increasing popularity of *job-embedded learning* (which includes mentoring and) *is learning by doing, reflecting on the experience, and then generating and sharing new insight and learning with ourself and others* (Wood & McQuarrie 1999) suggests there is already a strong belief in leadership circles of the imminent value of such relationships. This type of connectedness helps *participants develop trust and the ability to give and receive non-judgmental feedback* (Wood & McQuarrie 1999).

And we cannot simply expect the universities to alter their current programs to address all these needs and opportunities. Their present internship programs generally are regarded as *one of the weaker aspects of (their) preparation programs* (Crow & Matthews, 1998). *As Sparks and Hirsch (1997) have noted, job-embedded learning is a new paradigm for staff development that will help shape professional learning in the 21st century* (Woods & McQuarrie 1999). It actually gives us a new perspective on inservice learning and training, *It presents educators with an alternative to workshop-based professional development and other more traditional inservice learning programs. It changes our thinking about work from completing tasks to viewing daily experiences as opportunities to learn* (Wood & McQuarrie 1999).

Expectation(s)

As this process unfolds it is expected that, in addition to the direct results of the research itself, certain outcomes will emerge.

Boards of Trustees and/or Directors will be encouraged to look at this as an alternate way to acknowledge and evaluate their administrators.

- Staff developers (will) give more attention to finding ways to promote this kind of learning (Wood & McQuarrie 1999).
- The professional associations and/or organizations to which leaders belong will consider having the process formalized as an alternative to sending people back to graduate studies for certification.
- Political and professional leaders will examine the possibilities for requiring re-structuring of present systems in order to establish a process that is more appropriate for leadership development and accreditation than peer-tutoring or sector teams.
- Consideration will be given to developing mentoring as a variant on the theme of *prior learning assessment* (PLA) but directed towards leaders (instead of simply for adult learners looking for college credit).

As this is all part of the larger context of career development, it will benefit from some more thinking **outside the box**. There needs some serious discussions between the PLA thinkers and the designers of professional training programs. For example, the five step helping process that Vinge (1999) notes is used by career development facilitators and could be easily adapted to PLA, also parallels the processes discussed within this mentoring relationship (including: relationship building, goal setting, interventions, etc.). Vinge further suggests that what is needed to make this all work is more rigorous attention to determining: what has been learned? and what skills have been acquired (and retained)? It would not be a difficult exercise to combine her work along with that of Geoff Peruniak of Athabasca University (noted by Vinge at a presentation at NATCON 1998) to create a potential matrix to help further formalize mentoring towards a moral acceptable and accreditable structure and format, And, as Montgomery (1999) has discovered, some willingness to recognize the real differences (and opportunities) that exist outside the metropolitan urban centres in our society.

As Crow & Matthews draw from George Bernard Shaw:

> *The reasonable man [sic] adapts himself to the world, the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man [sic] (George Bernard Shaw, quoted in Nicholson (1984), pp. 174-175).*

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